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Conference Committee of Managers, New York

The public and railroad wages

[New York?]

[1915?]

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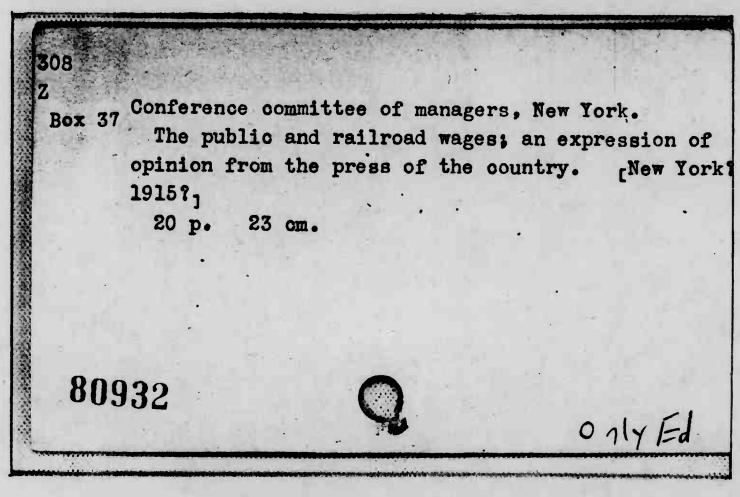

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The Public and Railroad Wages

An expression of opinion from the press of the country

Conference Committee of Managers
New York

1915 ?

EXTRAVAGANT WAGES UNJUSTIFIED.

Railroad labor, certainly organized railroad labor, is probably as well paid, and some say better paid, than labor of other kinds, upon the average. Railroad employes will hardly expect to receive wages which exceed those paid to other forms of labor for the same grade of service, and this Commission certainly could not permit a change of rates for the purpose of enabling railroads to pay their laborers extravagant compensation as measured by the general average compensation paid labor in this country as a whole.

Interstate Commerce Commission Report In the Advance in Rates Case, 1911.

The Public and Railroad Wages

Unions of train employes are not "a class apart" and must not flaunt the public interest to advance their own selfish ends.

In the official statement of the reasons for demanding an eight-hour day the railway brotherhoods take a strange view of their relationship to the people among whom they live.

To the proposition that vast increases in wage payments which would attend shorter hours might cause defaults or reductions in interest and dividends and lead to a stoppage of terminal improvements and other betterments of value to the public, **the response is that these are matters with which the brotherhoods have "nothing to do."** Replying to the question whether railroad rates and fares should be advanced in order to meet the higher earnings of labor, they say that it is not their fault that the railways cannot increase their revenues without the assent of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

It will occur to many friends of the railway employees that in taking this position they are doing themselves a wrong. The brotherhoods have a large and respectable membership, but it does not consist of a class apart. Every man, woman and child related to them has in a much larger way a stake in the community at large.

To pursue a dispute as to hours and wages on the theory that workingmen are entitled to all that can be forced from employers and extorted from the people by employers is not the best way to promote the permanent welfare of labor.

New York World.

Where the brotherhoods make their great mistake is in **assuming that their interests are distinct from the interests of their employers and of the public.** The interests of all three are tied together so firmly that they cannot be separated.

Rochester (N. Y.) Democrat and Chronicle.

A general strike of train employes would be ruinous to the business of the country. It would paralyze commerce and industry, and would be inconceivably destructive.

There **must not** be a great strike.

Savannah (Ga.) News.

A strike would ruinously affect every business in the United States from the largest manufactory to the crossroads grocery. There is no man, woman or child who would not feel its pinch. It would, if prolonged over a week, tie up all industry and business.

Duluth (Minn.) Tribune.

It is imperative that the differences between railroad capital and labor should be adjusted before the men begin putting their threats into effect in March.

Portsmouth (N. H.) Times.

If the railroad unions present their demands, if the railroads refuse, if arbitration fails, and if a general strike should ensue, this nation **would lose more in three weeks than it could possibly gain in 40 years of rate juggling.**

Houston (Texas) Chronicle.

Just as the railroads have begun to make money, after several hard years, they are threatened with a great strike. Four national railroad unions threaten to tie up every steam road in the country. The number of employees involved may total 400,000. They seem to have it in their power to stop all freight and passenger traffic on 250,600 miles of track.

We have never had a strike of such scope and magnitude. **It would paralyze all American industry** and commerce and stop our export trade. A nation of 100,000,000 people would stand still, while its biggest industry fought out a question of wages and hours. A deadlock would be inconceivably destructive.

Bangor (Me.) News.

Railroad managers no longer hold the view that they are dealing with a purely private business. They recognize that the public has rights which the carriers must respect.

Time was when the overwhelming majority of railway magnates acted on the assumption that they were dealing with a purely private business and that the public had nothing to do but pay the freight, looking meanwhile as pleasant as possible. Many years of costly struggle were needed to teach the railway magnates that common carriers have duties, as well as rights, and that the public has rights which the government will put forth its full strength to protect. **The railways, having learned the lesson, their employes must attend the same school.**

New Orleans Times-Picayune.

The unions deny that public welfare requires consideration by them. They say that it is unfair to expect that "railway employes and their dependents must sacrifice their interests to the general betterment and welfare of the remainder of the population."

Just at the present time nearly 400,000 men, most of them the **highest paid in the railway service,** ask that their wage day be eight hours instead of ten, and for any work over eight hours they be paid one and one-half times the hourly rate for the eight hours. They announce that they have decided to make this demand upon the railroads this spring, and if it is not granted a strike will be ordered on all the railroads in the United States and Canada, and they add that they will not consent to any form of arbitration. The people of the United States should try to realize just the quality and significance of this demand of organized labor, at present unregulated by any restraining law. Where does this **dictum of 400,000 men place all the rest of the population?**

New York Evening Sun.

Nor are the railroad workers favorably disposed toward "arbitration" any more; they have had their experience with that capitalist "pill" and will have none of it. They have learned from tests made what it means to have representatives of the "disinterested public" upon settlement boards; they have learned that these "disinterested" representatives always cast the deciding vote the other way. **So they have removed "arbitration" from their slate.** That's another wise step.

New York People (Socialist Labor).

With the technical questions involved in the dispute as to hours, wages and overtime pay, the public is not now nearly so much concerned as with the apparent determination of at least one part of the belligerents to spurn, at the start, any claim that the public may make that the country shall be spared an economic war and a hold-up of its transportation system. If the labor leaders assume that the people who travel and the people who ship goods will stand by the railway employes **in any such attitude of defiance, they misread the signs of the times.**

Boston Christian Science Monitor.

The railroad laborer is worthy of his hire. The public will stand behind him in any reasonable and fair demand. It does not appear to be reasonable or fair to pursue the course the "aristocrats of the rail" have taken. They have left nothing open to discussion.

Brooklyn Daily Eagle.

Should the railroads refuse to make the desired concessions, as there is every reason to suppose they will, we are told that steps will be immediately taken for their enforcement.

This means that the railroad employes will not agree to submit the issue to arbitration. Why they should be unwilling to do so, in view of the fact that in every previous instance where a similar controversy has been arbitrated they have secured a substantial part of what they had claimed, is not easily intelligible. Upon this occasion, however, if the current reports may be credited, they have assumed an uncompromising attitude, an attitude which suggests some misgivings as to their ability to convince any board of arbitration which might imaginably be appointed that the demands upon which they are intending to insist are fair and reasonable and right.

Philadelphia Inquirer.

The public is directly concerned in the demands of the unions and its interests must receive primary consideration.

This is not a private dispute within an industry. It is a big public problem, and public opinion rather than private interest or prejudice should decide it.

South Bend (Ind.) News.

Hence the wage dispute, involving all the railroads of the land, rises far above the rights of either the workmen or the companies. **It touches the rights of every one of our 100,000,000 people.** Any process of arbitration that only takes into account two sides of this great triangle of employees, employers and public will be gross injustice. **The public has quite as much at stake as the others,** and it ought to insist that it be heard.

Philadelphia Public Ledger.

It is the rankest nonsense for The Trainman to pretend that the public has nothing to do with this business. The public has everything to do with it, as the brotherhoods will find, if they refuse arbitration and cast conservatism to the winds. The most cowardly government could not, in that case, shrink from its supreme duty of keeping the national highways open to commerce.

New Orleans Times-Picayune.

Experience has taught the public that in all cases of a wage increase it eventually has to foot the bills. Hence **a dispute involving all of the railroads touches the rights of all of the people,** and, as the public has quite as much at stake as have employees and employers, it ought to insist that it be heard.

Utica (N. Y.) Herald-Dispatch.

Labor's wage now absorbs the larger part of the charge made by the railroads for performing transportation service. **Payments to labor come out of the public pocket,** being extracted therefrom by means of freight and passenger rates. The public is accordingly vitally interested in a clear understanding of the railroad wage question.

New York Sun.

The matter is of importance to the people of the country because in the end the people must pay the bill for increased wages. They must pay it either in the form of increased wages or deteriorated service. That unusual board of arbitrators which a few years ago passed upon the demands of the Eastern employees went comprehensively into this phase of the subject and its report has become a classic. There is no escape from its logic. **The people pay the bill.**

Baltimore Sun.

The demand of the unions is for higher wages, not for shorter hours. They do not expect or desire to limit the actual working day to eight hours.

The present agitation is nominally for the substitution of an eight-hour workday in place of the present ten-hour schedule, **but in reality it is a move for an increase of wages.**

Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.

When the railroad trainmen ask for an eight-hour day with time and a half for overtime all now understand that **they do not expect to work fewer hours, but to get more pay for the time worked.**

San Francisco Chronicle.

The demands which 400,000 workers on all the railroads of the country may make of their employers after March 1, are shrewdly indicated to appear like nothing more than a length-of-day adjustment. They really entail, we are assured, not only a material increase for overtime work, but will involve an actual increase of wages which will make the aggregate many millions of dollars.

New Haven (Conn.) Evening Register.

In substance the movement means **eight hours work for ten hours pay** and in effect an increase of over 25 per cent. in an annual payroll of about $389,000,000.

Pittsburgh Gazette Times.

The eight-hour day which the railroad men of the country are demanding is not a demand to be let off after working eight hours. It is really a demand for increased wages.

Utica (N. Y.) Observer.

That the men are asking for higher wages and not for shorter working hours is frankly stated by leaders of the unions. Val Fitzpatrick, legislative agent and vice-president of the trainmen, in an article in the current issue of the Railroad Trainman, makes this clear: **"There is quite a difference,"** he says, **"between an eight-hour workday and an eight-hour basic workday.** The eight-hour basic workday, which is the system proposed by the train service brotherhoods, contemplates that eight hours shall be the basis for a day's work, and any time in excess shall be paid for as overtime. **Under such a system there is no limit to the hours worked."**

Northampton (Mass.) Gazette.

Now, since **the men really haven't any thought of an actual eight-hour day**—since it isn't possible that there could be any such thing on the most important runs of the railroads—they ought to get down to a frank statement and fair discussion of exactly what they do want—more wages.

New York Press.

Train employes are now well paid, as shown by reports to the Interstate Commerce Commission. Actual figures of their yearly earnings show that these have attained a very high level.

Official reports to the Interstate Commerce Commission and the undisputed evidence presented in recent arbitrations in the East and West show that the actual earnings of men of the train service average approximately:

Engineers	$1760
Conductors	1520
Firemen	1030
Trainmen	1020
Average of all men in train service	1240

While the average earning of all other railroad employees, including the officers, who constitute 82 per cent. of the railroad army, as compared with these 18 per cent. in train service, comes to about $700 a year. This numerical division of the whole railroad force contains matter for serious consideration by all interested persons, including the general public.

New York Evening Sun.

Almost half of every dollar of transportation revenue received by the railroads is now paid out to their employees. How much more of railroad revenue indirectly goes to reward labor in the purchase of material used by the carriers is a matter of conjecture, but it is a reasonable guess that fully **two-thirds of the railroad dollar goes to labor.**

Dayton (Ohio) Herald.

Some interesting figures, just issued by the Erie Railroad, throw an interesting light upon this subject. In 1914 it paid to its 38,782 employees wages amounting to $28,297,226, an increase in the total amount of wages paid over 1902 of 70 per cent. while the increase in the number of employees was 26 per cent. The gross operating revenue for 1914 was $60,983,575. Thus it is shown that **the employees receive nearly half of the receipts.**

Glens Falls (N. Y.) Star.

Wages of the group of employees making present demands have been advanced repeatedly. Labor's share of railroad gross receipts is now over 45 per cent. as compared with 40 per cent. a few years ago.

All four classes of employees have had substantial wage increases in recent years, and the pay of engineers and conductors especially is an object of envy on the part of men in most other lines of employment.

Springfield (Mass.) Union.

Because of wage increases awarded to the four classes involved in the present demand—engineers, firemen, conductors and trainmen—**their earnings have jumped in four years $70,000,000.**

The proposed schedule would be in effect an increase of 25 per cent. in the freight speed basis for wage computing.

It would mean an increase of 87½ per cent. in the overtime rate.

More than 1,500,000 other employees would get no benefit.

Newburgh (N. Y.) Journal.

Since 1910 the payrolls of the railroads as a whole have increased from $1,140,000,000 to $1,500,000,000 at the present time **because of wage increases during the interval.**

Detroit Michigan Investor.

Should the eight-hour day be established, either there would be a great increase in wage to the present force under the time-and-a-half pay for overtime—**or else there must be a large increase in the force of employees** and so a large increase in the pay-roll.

Fall River (Mass.) News.

The proportion of the gross receipts of the railroads paid out in wages has been steadily rising in the past few years by reason of the successive wage advances. Out of every dollar now received by the roads for carrying freight and passengers the employees get 45 cents; in other words, the pay-roll absorbs not far from half of the three billion dollars of gross revenue. **Two-thirds of the total cost of operation is for labor.** The employees' share of the total receipts has risen from 40 per cent, to 45 per cent. in the past few years.

Oil City (Pa.) Derrick.

Wages have greatly increased in the United States. This is true even in the face of the fact that operating revenues were decreased by business depression. One of our home railroads, the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway, may be taken as an illustration. In 1913, notwithstanding depressed conditions, this company paid its locomotive engineers an average of $230.39 per month, or $2,764.68 per year. The lowest monthly compensation paid an engineer was $209.55, or $2,514.60 a year. Conductors averaged $173.54 a month, or $2,082.48 a year, while some who were longer in the service received as much as $185 per month. Firemen, who are popularly supposed to get comparatively small wages, were paid an average of $122.71 per month, the lowest paid being $112.15, and the highest $137.60, or $1,651.20 a year. Brakemen received an average of $113.90 a month, and some as much as $150, or $1,440 a year. These figures are the more striking when compared with what is paid for the same work by English railways, which average from $30 to $65 a month.

Memphis (Tenn.) News-Scimitar.

Train service employes receive wages much higher than those of workers in other industries of like requirements. Engineers, firemen, conductors and trainmen are the best paid group of wage workers in the country.

The enginemen and trainmen receive almost twice as much wages on the average as all other employes. It thus appears that **in wages more than $1,300,000,000 is being paid out annually by the railroads** and the requests will amount to about $100,000,000 more for a few classes of employees. This is five per cent. on $2,000,000,000.

Philadelphia Inquirer.

Engineers, firemen, conductors and trainmen who are now seeking new concessions from the railroads are well paid in comparison with other classes of employees, and it is to be feared that they do not take the general railroad condition into account when making their demands. They have agitated concessions in wages and hours of labor for many years, and no sooner do they get one favor than they set out to secure another.

Lowell (Mass.) Sun.

The present demand of the four Brotherhoods of Locomotive Engineers, Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, Railway Conductors and Railroad Trainmen ignores the fact that they are the best paid employes in the railway service—in fact, the best paid in all the country's industries—while large classes of unorganized railway employes are admittedly receiving wages that are too low. **The question is not one of shorter hours.** That plea is hypocritical. It is a question of "punitive overtime." The four unions have already exacted the provision that if a man is called for duty and performs any service, even fifteen minutes' service, he shall receive a day's pay. A run of ten hours is equivalent to a day, and extra pay is stipulated if the run exceeds ten hours. **But the demand of the unions is not to reduce the length of runs.** That is impossible. Their hours will remain the same, but their demand is for pay on the basis of an eight-hour day, with pay and a half for time worked over eight hours.

Philadelphia Public Ledger.

It may be assumed that there will be less public sympathy with demands for railway wage increases in the future for two reasons. There is a general feeling that **railway wages are already as high or higher than those of other vocations of like requirements,** while the public has also learned that the shippers and passengers must pay the increases when granted.

Jamestown (N. Y.) Post.

Few wage earners receive anything like the monthly pay envelope of locomotive engineers. Firemen also receive wages in excess of the average, while conductors and trainmen are by no means the most poorly paid of workers.

Bayonne (N. J.) Times.

To increase the wages of the small proportion of railroad employes making the present demands would be an act of injustice to the great body of employes who are now less well paid.

It will strike many that if there is to be an increase in the total sum of railway wages the low paid rather than the high paid men of the railway service should be taken care of first. If there is arbitration, as there is likely to be, the issue should be joined in such a way as to permit the claims of railway clerks and laborers to be presented. If justice demands higher compensation and shorter days for both, the facts should be squarely faced and railroad rates proportionately increased, but if there is to be discrimination, and only some are to be favored, the $700 railroad employe would seem to have a better claim than the $1,240 employe.

New York Globe.

According to a table prepared by railroad men, **the proposed eight-hour demand is to be made by only 18 per cent. of all the railroad workers.** The railroads point out that this 18 per cent. absorbs 28 per cent of the total railroad payroll, or some $389,000,000 out of a total of $1,381,000,000 paid to all employees. They have gained award after award, the railroads claim, because of their stronger bargaining power, while hundreds of thousands of other railroad employees, such as station agents, machinists, shop-men, telegraphers, trackmen, etc., have plodded along without the cream gathered by the service men. That point is bound to be brought out strong as an argument against the demands of the service men this spring.

Meriden (Conn.) Record.

The railroads now pay for all overtime. To put a premium on overtime, by an advance of 87½ per cent. in the overtime rate, would place an insupportable burden on the carriers.

There is always a certain amount of work to be done each day by each railroad, and if it is not accomplished in regular time it MUST be done in overtime. And experience shows that many men will do as little work as possible during the short workday in order to create overtime work and get the 50 per cent. higher pay.

This not only defeats the very object of the eight-hour day, but makes labor cost unfairly high to the employer.

New York American.

It is in the charges for overtime under this system that the wage increase, which the railroads fear so much, comes in. That the total increase would amount to a tax of many millions on railroad revenues is not denied. The railroads estimate that "with the proposed overtime rate fixed at time and a half, the new higher rate, there would be **an increase in the overtime rate now paid of 87½ per cent.**"

Baltimore Sun.

In operating trains it is impossible to avoid overtime and the union officials admit that some of their members prefer the extra hour jobs. **The demand is for an eight-hour day at ten-hour wages,** yet they say they are not asking for more pay. Comment on that is useless. The milk in the cocoanut is that there would be much more overtime with an eight-hour day than with one of ten hours, and they ask time and one-half for extra time.

Paterson (N. J.) News.

Present conditions of train operation make the adoption of a fixed eight-hour day on railroads impossible.

A few questions may be asked of the 400,000 men or their leaders. If the eight-hour day is the proper day, **will they consent that nobody shall receive the eight-hour wage save for eight hours' work?** Will they consent that nobody shall receive pay for more than the "proper" eight-hour day? Unless they answer both questions affirmatively the bad faith of their demands is indicated. Many of them work only part of the "proper" day, but receive the full pay.

New York Times.

A hard and fast demand that employes shall work only eight hours a day, no matter what the nature of their work, is neither logical nor reasonable. The number of hours a man should work should depend, mainly, upon what he does in his working day.

The number of hours a day that any man should work, then, must depend upon the amount of work he may fairly be expected to do for his pay, without injury to his health, and with the greatest amount of real efficiency. But to lump nearly 400,000 men together, and to say that not one of them can work a minute longer than any one of the others, without injury to his efficiency—is it reasonable? Is it sound? Is it logical?

Boston Advertiser.

As to the demand for an eight-hour day with time and a half for overtime, that does not seem the fair way. In operating trains strict adherence to an eight-hour day is not possible. The pay should be such as to afford proper remuneration for the time necessarily employed, while encouraging trainmen to make as good time as they safely may, and not tempt them to delay for the express purpose of increasing their pay.

San Francisco Chronicle.

The railroads cannot now shoulder a $100,000,000 yearly advance in wages unless they are allowed to increase their revenues.

In the meantime the railroads of this country cannot meet the demands of their employees even if they were willing. Many of them are in the hands of receivers, and many more are on the verge of insolvency.

Houston (Texas) Chronicle.

To secure the millions of dollars with which to meet the conditions to be imposed by compliance with the demands, it is asserted, the corporations would be forced to default on their interest obligations, to reduce or omit entirely their dividends, to suspend for an indefinite time, or abandon entirely, all improvements now under way or under contemplation and to increase freight and passenger rates, which could not be done without the sanction of the interstate commerce commission.

Chattanooga (Tenn.) Times.

No one can take from the railroads what they do not possess. If they have the money to pay what these unions ask for, that is another matter. But if they have not the money, **where are they going to get it?** Will the unions guarantee to see that the interstate commerce and the state railroad commissions permit the railroads to pass the charge on to shippers and travelers? And will the unions guarantee that shippers and travelers will accept the burden?

Buffalo Express.

We believe that sensible people will realize that the railroads of the country, and all would be similarly affected, the small and poor as well as the great and prosperous, **are in no condition to meet such excessive demands** as these which are now being instigated by the union leaders. The railroads have been hit very hard in recent years between the constant demands of the employees and the restrictions placed upon the roads by the Interstate Commerce Commission, and federal and state legislation. **The wages paid the employees have been increased from 1910 to 1914 by $250,000,000 without any increase in the number of men employed.** These increases in conjunction with restrictions in operation have been serious for the railroads and the result is seen not only in reduced returns, in many roads a deficit taking the place of a dividend, but in the collapse of additions and betterments to service.

Bangor (Me.) Daily Commercial.

The public pays every cent of the railroad wage bill. If the payroll is increased by acceptance of the demands of the unions, the public must ultimately foot the bill.

Even the man who knows nothing about the details of present wage scales understands, of course, that any advance in the compensation of railroad workmen is sure to show itself in time in the cost of transportation and the price of commodities. As always, it is the consumer who foots the bills.

Providence Tribune.

One thing is certain: The railroads, with rates fixed by law and custom, and increased with difficulty, have been caught by the steady rise in prices to a greater extent than almost any other business. There were fewer miles of new railroad built in the United States last year than in any year in the last fifty, and there are more miles of railroads in the hands of receivers than ever before in our history. Whatever the wage determination is, it must sooner or later be reflected in railroad **rates.**

Waterbury (Conn.) Republican.

It is apparent, therefore, that the railroads cannot grant further favors to their employees, in the way of reduced hours of labor and increases in wages, unless they can have the privilege of making increases in freight rates, and possibly, in some instances, in passenger rates also.

Chester (Pa.) Times.

Sooner or later the Interstate Commerce Commission will have to take cognizance of the situation, when an appeal for higher freight and passenger rates is made. The shipper and passenger, the public itself, finally must bear the burden.

In a situation of this kind, where the operation of public utilities is concerned, the public itself has a vital interest, and this interest can only be protected by arbitration.

Cumberland (Md.) News.

To say that this proposal will not command strong public favor at this time is to voice a plain truth,and there are various reasons for it. If wages must be boosted again before the companies have fairly begun to reap the benefits from increased freight rates and a revival of prosperity, their financial situation will again be acute, and another agitation for rate increases will be engendered.

Springfield (Mass.) Union.

The public is learning a lesson about a good many things these days. Among others, it is realizing that increased railroad profits come out of the public and not out of the employees of the railroads, and also **that increased wages come out of the public** and not out of the employers. Either form of advanced cost of operation is passed along and is saddled upon the ultimate consumer in the way of higher prices for everything that enters into living requirements.

Detroit Free Press.

As a matter of fact, the railroads have just emerged from a period of sharp contraction. Threatened by demands of labor in one direction which they have been unable to refuse and by government repression on the other hand, denying them the right exercised by every other organization to compensate themselves for increased expenses by increased charges, the railroads have been seriously handicapped. Only recently did the government allow them to partially recoup themselves for increased burdens by an advance in rates, which has not even yet been granted to all sections.

Williamsport (Pa.) Gazette.

Two-thirds of the cost of railroad operation is for labor. Should there be regulation of wages by the Government, which now fixes railroad rates, in order that the income and expenses of the railroads may be kept in their proper relation?

When the men employed to operate the trains of the railroads in the United States decide that they want increased compensation for their services, their demand goes directly to the railroads, and is backed up with the implied, if not stated, menace of a strike. There is **no agency of the government to which the employees' demands must be submitted** for approval or disapproval. It has been thus far the rule that they have been compelled to make liberal wage concessions to their employees whenever they were asked. Likewise it has been the rule that they have been able to obtain only small rate concessions from the interstate commerce commission, and those with difficulty and after long delay.

Albany Evening Journal.

The exercise of the authority of the general government having been so effectively employed in the regulation of passenger and freight rates on railroads, the situation created by the pending demand of the employees for reduced hours and increased wages raises the question of whether it may not be necessary to extend the government **regulation to wages** and other details of labor.

Chester (Pa.) Times.

The railroads cannot go on forever paying an increasing portion of their income to their employees without an evident necessity of higher rates to preserve their credit. If the Government assumes to regulate rates it cannot much longer avoid **the assumption of responsibility for railroad wages,** which have become the most potent factor in rate making.

New York Sun.

The time has come when there should be a general inquiry into the railroad situation such as was proposed by President Wilson in his annual message. If there is need for a general readjustment of wages and hours on the railroads, the readjustment should be made, but it should be realized that the wage scale of semi-public corporations has a very close relation to freight and passenger charges. Since the government is regulating one branch of the railroad business, it cannot altogether ignore the other branch. If it does, it invites labor wars in which the public is the chief sufferer.

Washington Post.

The government, which has of late years enforced regulations concerning rates which have reduced the earnings of the carriers, will ultimately be compelled to consider the **regulation of wages** with relation to the income of the roads. If the Federal government can fix rates there is no reason why it should not fix pay, and, if wages are advanced, allow the companies to advance tariffs to meet the increase. Of course, if this is done, the public will pay, but the public always pays ultimately.

Newburgh (N. Y.) Journal.

In an article written soon after the failure of the great Chicago strike of 1894, Carroll D. Wright said that the events of that outbreak, closely verging on civil war, emphasized the claim that **there must be some legislation to place railroad employees on a par with the railroad employers in conducting the business of transportation,** so far as the terms and conditions of employment were concerned. In other words, there should be a declaration of law that **all wages paid,** as well as charges for any service rendered in the transportation of property, passengers, etc., **shall be reasonable and just.**

New York Journal of Commerce.

Will the Government ultimately be forced to take over the ownership of the railroads for the protection of the public against strikes and threats of strikes?

Unless the government is ready to adopt a policy of protection to investors in railroad securities, government ownership should come as soon as a plan for it may be worked out. They [the railroads] are at present at the mercy of the employees and of the interstate commerce commission. **The interstate commerce commission now holds one arm of the employer, while organized labor attacks him.**

Chicago Tribune.

Sooner or later some fixed proportion must be established between railroad expenses and railroad earnings, if railroad ownership is to continue in private hands. There is an expense limit beyond which private capital will not go, and there is a transportation charge beyond which the shipping and traveling public will not go. When that limit and that charge have been reached the only alternative will be **Government ownership,** and that ownership may not be as generous as private capital. The public may at last refuse to be milked so heavily for the benefit of a special class.

Baltimore Sun.

Another betokening thing in the present movement is that the leaders of the men are said to be opposed to arbitration. They are reported to consider arbitration not satisfactory, but the men on every question submitted to arbitration have gained many points—have got more. The dispute will be vital for the railroads. If they are to be subjected to constant demands, if they can find no means of relief, if there is not some way of regulating, so that these wage disputes shall seldom, if ever, occur, the operating of railroads will become precarious as a private business, restricted on one hand by the government and open on the other hand, with the employees free to ask frequently for higher pay. If this situation continued, **the logical outcome would be the practical ownership by the government of the railroads,** something that for a countless number of reasons would be highly undesirable.

Wilmington (Del.) Morning News.

The success of the unions in enforcing their demands would mean a defeat for the public.

That such demands are indeed steps in a process that must raise the cost of living to new heights are plain enough, because **the upward tendency of wages for years past, along with the shortening of the work day, has unquestionably raised the cost of living.**

The economic aspects of the railway labor situation now approaching involve the welfare of the entire population of the country.

Houston (Tex.) Post.

It is clear, of course, that **a victory for railroad labor in the present case would mean a defeat of the interests of the public.** For the public will have to pay or else see the country's railroads fall even more seriously behind than now in the work of keeping pace with the growth of traffic and in the work of maintaining their physical structure up to what it should be. It is not to be expected that the country and its governmental agencies will stand idly by for long, if labor wins in its present demands, and see its transportation systems starve financially. Rates will have to be boosted beyond their normally reasonable limits, and the public, of course, will have thus to pay for labor's greed.

Boston Financial News.

The Public's Stake.

The power of the railroad unions is very great. It remains to be seen whether it is great enough to precipitate a condition of universal want and misery among the workers of the country without creating a sentiment on the part of the public which even the most completely fortified element of society might well hesitate to inspire.

There would appear to be just two horns to this dilemma. Either the people must submit to a considerable increase in the cost of living through the cost of transportation, in order that the new demands of the railroaders be met, or they must submit to the paralysis of business and a long period of unemployment while the battle is being waged.

New London (Conn.) Day.

WAGES AND THE COST OF LIVING.

Are you a householder?

You are, anyway, a consumer.

You have to buy food and clothing and shoes.

You pay directly or indirectly, for coal, for lumber, for steel products, for house rent.

You contribute something to the earnings of the railroads, for almost everything you need has to be transported.

So far, so good.

Well, now, when wage increases are granted railway men, coal miners, iron workers, textile employes, etc., etc., YOU pay the increase.

It comes out of YOUR pocket.

The extra dollars are first **taken in** by the companies before they are **paid out.**

AND YOU—the consumer—do the **paying in.**

The higher the wages demanded and conceded, the heavier your expenses become.

B. C. Forbes, in the **New York American.**

Railroad Wage Facts

Railroad income $3,047,000,000

Railroad payroll $1,381,000,000

Out of every dollar paid by the public for transportation the employes receive 45 cents.

Railroad employes ... 1,710,000

Train employes 312,000

Train employes' wages. $389,000,000

Train men are only 18 per cent of the number of employes, but they receive 28 per cent of the wages.

Train employes' wages range from $800 to $4,000 a year, averaging more than $1,200. Average wages of all other railroad workers, $700.

The train men now demand a new wage schedule that will add $75,000,000 to $100,000,000 to the railroad payroll.

Their demand is that the basic pay-day be changed from 10 hours to 8 hours, with an increase of 87½ per cent in the present overtime rate.

The demand is for higher wages and not for shorter hours.

THE SINGLE ISSUE IS WHETHER THE HIGHEST PAID RAILROAD WORKERS ARE ENTITLED TO STILL HIGHER PAY.

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